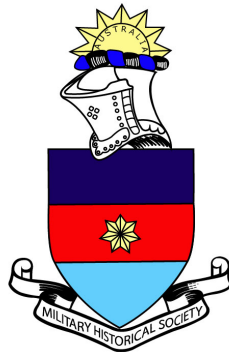


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The Raid on Jifjafa – April 1916 (Part 1)

Col Jim Underwood (retd)

From 11-14 April 1916 a small British Imperial force, the main combat element of which was drawn from the 9th Australian Light Horse Regiment, conducted a long-range raid against the Turkish post at Jifjafa.¹ Jifjafa, located in the Sinai Desert 84 kilometres (52 miles) east of Ismailia on the Suez Canal, was the site of drilling for water by the Turkish Army. In this operation, the first offensive action by the Australian Light Horse in the Sinai campaign,² the raiding force covered some 260 kilometres (160 miles) in three and a half days over largely unknown territory much of it by night; fought a sharp action in which it overwhelmed the Turkish post, killed or captured the entire garrison, destroyed the bores and drilling equipment, secured valuable documents; and on their return to base endured a fierce sand storm and narrowly avoided a mass drowning when the wadi in which troops were resting was flooded in a sudden spate. During this 'stunt' most of the force managed less than twelve hours sleep!

Aim

The aim of this paper is to examine the planning and conduct of the Jifjafa raid. The raid was not simply a Light Horse squadron riding off into the desert and attacking the Turkish post; but rather a carefully planned and well executed minor operation specifically ordered by General Headquarters, Egyptian Expeditionary Force, Cairo.

The Jifjafa raid is of particular interest because it was the first demonstration in the Sinai campaign of a swift and successful attack across many kilometres of waterless desert by mounted troops cooperating with Royal Flying Corps (RFC) reconnaissance aircraft and logistically supported by the newly raised Camel Transport Corps. The Turkish High Command had believed that the Jifjafa post was beyond the striking range of British ground forces defending the Suez Canal and it was therefore only lightly garrisoned. From early April to mid-July 1916, British mounted troops, principally Australian Light Horse, conducted 16 of these operations with the strike force varying in size from one squadron to two brigades. The objectives of these operations were: to destroy water resources on the Central Route across the Sinai Desert which could be used by Turkish forces in a new attack against the Suez Canal, to gain information on the terrain features of the Sinai Desert and the Turkish troops operating there, and to deny information on the Canal defences to the enemy.³

Part 1 examines the operational setting, composition of the force, the military experience of several of the key commanders prior to the Jifjafa raid and the preparations for the raid. Part 2, which will appear in the next issue of *Sabretache* will cover the conduct of the raid and its aftermath.

¹ Jifjafa is variously spelt Jifjaffa, Jif-Jaffa, Jif Jaffa, Jif Jafa, Jiff Jaffa, Bir el Jifjafa, Bir el Jifjaffa and Gifgaffa in contemporary documents and maps. Jifjafa is used in the 3rd Australian Light Horse Brigade Operation Order No 6 mounting the operation and in the Australian Official History.

² However, this was not the first offensive action by the Australian Light Horse in Egypt. In December 1915 and January 1916, a composite Light Horse Regiment formed from details remaining in Egypt when the Light Horse Brigades deployed to Gallipoli had seen action against the Senussi forces in the Western Desert of Egypt.

³ The Marquess of Anglesey, *A History of the British Cavalry 1816 to 1919, Volume 5, Egypt, Palestine and Syria 1914 to 1919*, London, Leo Cooper, 19, p. 33.

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The Operational Setting (Map 1)

During the early months of 1916 the British High Command in Egypt expected the Turkish Army in Palestine, reinforced with troops released from the Gallipoli campaign, to mount a second major attack against the Suez Canal. Three main routes of advance across the Sinai Desert were available to the Turkish force:

Northern Coastal Route – from Gaza through El Arish and Katia (Qatiya) to Kantara;

Central Route – through the Sinai hills from Beersheba via Auja, Kossaima, Hassana and Jifjafa to Ismailia; and

Southern Route – from Akaba or Kossaima through Nekhl to Suez.

In the first unsuccessful Turkish attack against the Suez Canal in February 1915 all three routes were used; but the main body of the Turkish force advanced along the Central Route.

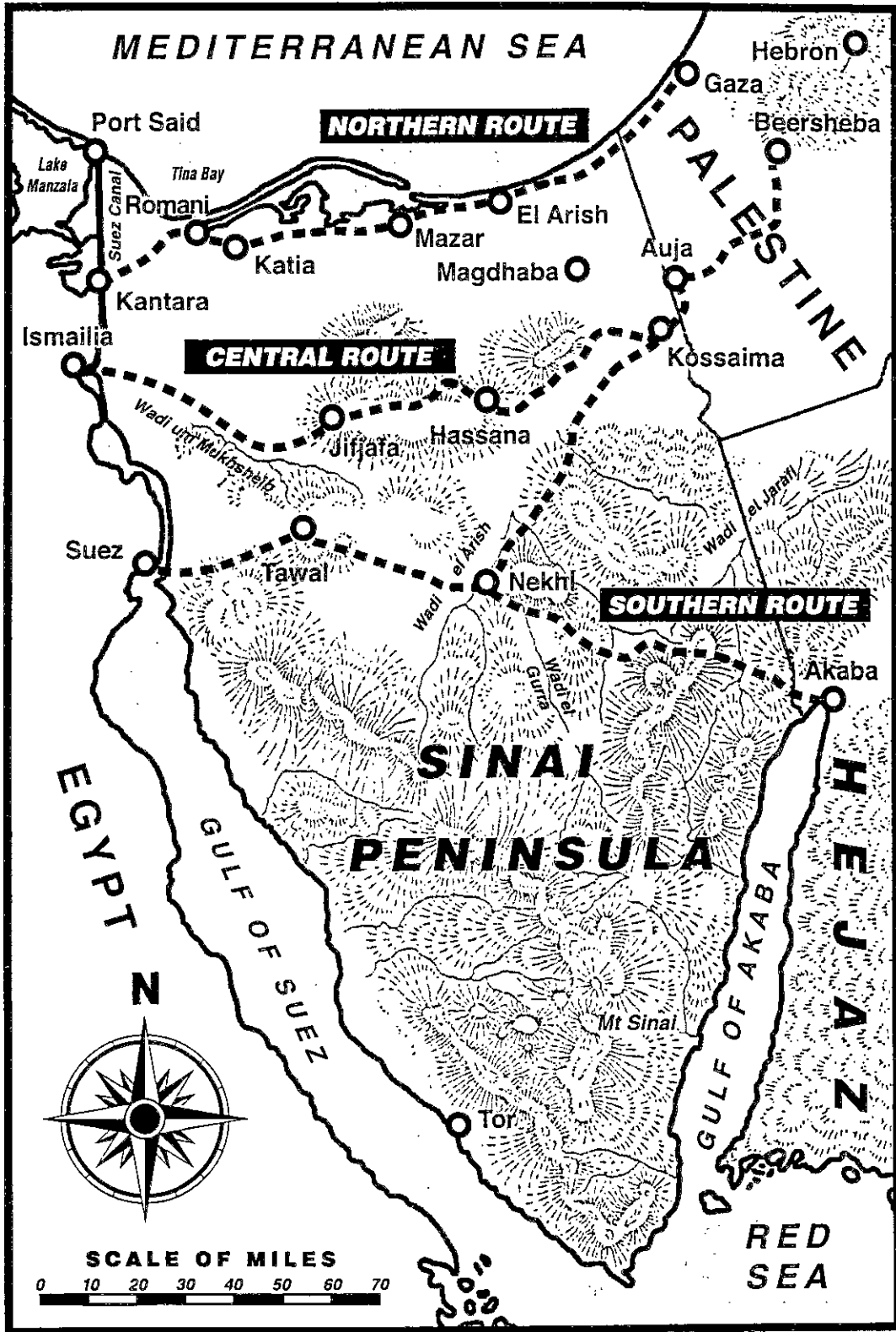
A significant factor in the conduct of operations throughout the Sinai campaign was the availability of water. Water dictated the scale, location and duration of operations. While ample supplies of brackish water were available from wells and by digging in the sand along the Northern Coastal Route, this route was vulnerable to interdiction from the sea in its northern sector between Gaza and El Arish. Furthermore, the soft sand over which it ran for most of its length made movement by Infantry very slow and exhausting and severely reduced the mobility of mounted troops and horse drawn artillery and vehicles. Katia Oasis, some 40 kilometres (25 miles) east of the Suez Canal on the Northern Route, was the only reliable water supply where a significant enemy force could be maintained within striking distance of the Canal and, beginning in April 1916, the British Command took steps to garrison the oasis. At the same time ground operations were commenced to deny water supplies to any Turkish advance along the Central Route. (Several air attacks had been conducted in February and March 1916 on Turkish water supplies on the Central Route but with limited results due to the small bomb load carried.)

The Central Route – the Darb el Maghaza – was the historical high road between Palestine and Egypt. From Beersheba it traversed central Sinai by way of Auja, Kossaima, Hassana and Jifjafa, usually following the beds of wadis. Jifjafa is located in a broad saddle in the Sinai Hills at an altitude of 1,000 feet. West of Jifjafa, the track descended towards Ismailia by the bed of the Wadi um Muksheib which could be followed to within a day's march of Ismailia. Although the track was rough and broken with many steep gradients, the surface was generally passable to wheeled vehicles. During the February 1915 attack on the Canal, the Turkish Army had been able to move 15 cm howitzers and pontoons along this route.

The Southern Route – part of the old Pilgrim's Way – was the longest and least desirable of the three avenues of advance. It wound its way through desolate rugged mountains, passable only to animals and impractical for wheeled vehicles.

Water is scarce on the Central and Southern Routes but during the period of winter rains from January to April the ancient rock cisterns are full and substantial pools of water remain in the wadis. Turkish preparations for a new invasion included the development of reliable water supplies on the Central Route; hence, the commencement of well boring activity at Jifjafa in December 1915. By April 1916 three bores had been sunk in the vicinity of the post.

Aircraft from 14 Squadron, RFC based at Ismailia regularly monitored the activity at Jifjafa. On 10 March 1916, a BE 2c reconnaissance aircraft was hit several times by small arms fire. On 11 March, a retaliatory raid was carried out in which seven 20 pound bombs were dropped on the



Map 1. Sinai Peninsula - showing main routes across the desert

post, including one bomb which landed close to one of the well-boring plants.⁴ On 26 March, Jifjafa was again attacked with bombs and machine gun fire from 200 feet. The garrison scattered into the low scrubby hills to the north and west of the post and returned fire hitting the aircraft, but in doing so sustained three casualties from machine gun fire.⁵ Other reconnaissance flights were conducted in late March and early April. During these flights the RFC pilots and observers noticed that the Turkish garrison followed a pattern of scattering into small groups when their aircraft approached the post. This enemy habit of dispersing into the nearby hills on the approach of an aircraft was to be put to good use by the Light Horse in their attack on Jifjafa.

On 3 April 1916, General Headquarters, Egyptian Expeditionary Force, Cairo (General Sir Archibald Murray) directed II Anzac Corps (Lieutenant General Sir A J Godley) – then controlling the central Ismailia sector of the Canal defences – ‘to prepare a suitable column to complete the destruction of JIFJAFFA’.⁶ The organisation of this operation was passed to Headquarters 4th Australian Infantry Division (Major General Sir H V Cox) for implementation. Major General Cox nominated the 3rd Australian Light Horse Brigade (Brigadier General J M Antill) to conduct the raid. (The Brigade was temporarily under command of the 4th Division.⁷) In turn, Brigadier General Antill selected Major H W Scott, acting Commanding Officer 9th Australian Light Horse Regiment, to command the column that would undertake the Jifjafa operation.⁸

3rd Australian Light Horse Brigade Operation Order No 6

On 7 April 1916, Brigadier General Antill issued Operation Order No 6 to mount the Jifjafa raid.⁹ The mission laid down in this order was:

To verify the reports of Agents and the Air Service as to the existence of a small Turkish post at JIFJAFA (not exceeding 40 men, including workmen).

To destroy at least two wells over which gins have been erected, and if possible capture the Post.

To report further upon:

- Water in vicinity of country traversed.
- Works and defences if any.
- Further information of military value.
- Effect capture if possible of enemy personnel or inhabitants.¹⁰

The operation was planned for 11-14 April in order to use the full moon period to facilitate night movement. Movement by night was cooler for men and animals, and enabled the force to make a covert approach to Jifjafa. The force detailed to undertake the operation is shown in Table 1.

⁴ AWM25 Item 423/1 Part 2: Intelligence Summary 16 March 1916 – General Headquarters Mediterranean Expeditionary Force.

⁵ AWM25 Item 423/1 Part 3 Intelligence Summary 31 March 1916 – General Headquarters Mediterranean Expeditionary Force.

⁶ AWM4 Item 1/6/1 Part 1 – War Diary, General Headquarters, Egypt 1-14 April 1916.

⁷ Headquarters Anzac Mounted Division (Major General H G Chauvel), 2nd Australian Light Horse Brigade and the New Zealand Mounted Rifles Brigade remained west of the Canal concentrating in the area to the west of Kantara. The remaining brigade of the division, 1st Australian Light Horse Brigade, was on detached duty in southern Egypt engaged in the Senussi campaign in the Western Desert.

⁸ AWM45 Item 7/9 2nd Australian and New Zealand Army Corps, Report – Raid on Jifjafa dated 18 April 1916.

⁹ AWM4 Item 10/3/5 War Diary: 3rd Australian Light Horse Brigade – April 1916.

¹⁰ *ibid.*

Table 1. Composition – Jifjafa Force¹¹

Unit	Officers	ORs	Horses	Camels	Comments
Force Headquarters	4		5		
Light Horse Squadron	7	122	137		Incl 12 ORs from 8 ALH Regt, 1 Offr and 4 ORs – MG detachment
Engineer Detachment	1	9	10	4	Australian Engineers
Wireless Detachment (Royal Engineers)	1	8	1	15	Provided by GHQ, Cairo ORs incl 3 Sudanese camel drivers
Royal Flying Corps	2	2	2	4	Liaison party
3 ALH Field Ambulance	1	8	13	6	Incl 2 sandcarts
Camel Transport Corps	1	2	3		2 WOs
Camel Transport Corps (Egyptian drivers)		95		195	
ALH Personnel attached Camel Transport Corps		29			For escort duty
Australian Army Service Corps		1	1		WO For distribution of rations and forage
Bikaner Camel Corps	1	24	37		Indian State troops For escort and despatch riding
Guides		2	2		Egyptian Coastguard
Interpreter		1	1		French and Arabic
Total	18	303	175	261	

Headquarters

The following officers were appointed to the Headquarters of the force:

Commanding Officer – Major W H Scott, 9th Australian Light Horse Regiment;

Staff Officer – Captain A E Wearne, 8th Australian Light Horse Regiment;

Intelligence Officer – Captain T C Macaulay, Royal Field Artillery, British Army;

Attached – Captain E B Ayriss, ADC to GOC 3rd Australian Light Horse Brigade.

Major Scott – a civil engineer of Preston, Victoria – had been commissioned into the Victorian Mounted Rifles in 1903. At the outbreak of the war he was a Captain commanding G Company 58th Infantry Regiment (Essendon Rifles), Australian Military Forces (AMF). He enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) on 11 November 1914 and was appointed Second in Command of C Squadron 9th Australian Light Horse Regiment. Headquarters, A and B Squadrons of this Regiment were raised in South Australia and C Squadron in Victoria. He was appointed Officer Commanding C Squadron on 1 February 1915. The Regiment departed Australia on 11 February 1915 and disembarked at Alexandria on 15 March. On 21 May, the Regiment landed on Gallipoli and remained there until 19 December 1915. In June 1915 Captain Scott was promoted Major. He was appointed Second in Command of the Regiment in August 1915. At Gallipoli the 9th Light Horse Regiment was engaged in heavy fighting at Walker's Ridge, Russell's Top, Chessboard, Hill 60 and Rhododendron Spur. Two Commanding Officers were killed during the Regiment's time there. For a short while in August and September 1915, Major Scott was acting Commanding Officer until he was evacuated to England with dysentery on

¹¹ Abbreviations: ALH = Australian Light Horse; Offr = Officer; WO = Warrant Officer; OR = Other Rank.

6 September. He rejoined the Regiment in Egypt in January 1916. In February and March he was again acting Commanding Officer and was in this appointment when he was called upon to lead the Jifjafa force. The raid commenced on his 35th birthday.¹²

Captain Wearne – an experienced scout, Boer War veteran and, prewar, the Reuters correspondent in China – enlisted in the AIF on 6 October 1915 at the age of 44 years and was immediately commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant. He was initially posted to the 11th Reinforcements 6th Light Horse Regiment. He departed Australia on 23 October 1915 and arrived in Egypt on 24 November. On 28 January 1916, he was promoted Lieutenant and transferred to the 8th Light Horse Regiment. On 20 February 1916, he was promoted Captain.¹³

Captain Wearne had previously served in the New South Wales Mounted Rifles from 1889-1894 and was first commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant in 1892. He was a Lieutenant when he resigned in 1894. He was one of the first to volunteer for the New South Wales contingent to the Boer War enlisting as a Trooper in A Squadron, New South Wales Mounted Rifles in October 1899. He arrived in South Africa in December 1899 and remained there until August 1900 when he was invalided back to Australia. At this time he held the rank of Sergeant. He returned to South Africa in March 1901 as a Lieutenant in the 2nd New South Wales Mounted Rifles. In 1902 he served as the Adjutant of the 3rd New South Wales Imperial Bushmen in South Africa.¹⁴

Captain Wearne had commanded the squadron of the 8th Light Horse Regiment which carried out the first Light Horse reconnaissance into the Sinai Desert from 21–23 March. This force reconnoitred the water sources in the vicinity of the Bedouin camp of Moyia Harab some 56 kilometres (35 miles) south east of Serapeum on the Canal. Water was found in a number of cisterns and pools in the Wadi um Muksheib. In this operation the squadron covered 130 kilometres (80 miles) of desert in 37 hours, including halts. The men and horses finished strong and fresh, but the pace they set was excessive for the supply camels which accompanied the column. While no contact was made with the enemy, many useful lessons were learned on this reconnaissance which were incorporated into the preparation of the Jifjafa force.¹⁵

Captain Macaulay's normal appointment was General Staff Officer Grade 3 (GSO 3) on Headquarters II Anzac Corps. He was an Arabic speaker. He had accompanied Captain Wearne on his reconnaissance to Wadi um Muksheib. He had also flown over the proposed route of the Jifjafa raid as an observer in an RFC aircraft in early April.

Captain Ayris, a 39 year old Perth accountant, enlisted in the AIF on 10 December 1914 and was posted initially to the 6th Reinforcements 10th Light Horse Regiment. As he had had 15 years service in the British Army, he was immediately promoted to Sergeant. On 1 May 1915, he received his commission as a 2nd Lieutenant and was then posted to the 8th Reinforcements 10th Light Horse Regiment. He was promoted Lieutenant on 1 June 1915. He embarked Fremantle on 2 September 1915 and arrived in Egypt on 25 September. He remained with the 3rd Australian Light Horse Brigade details at Heliopolis Camp, Cairo, until he joined the 10th Light Horse Regiment on its return from Gallipoli in December 1915. On 5 January 1916, he was posted as ADC to GOC 3rd Australian Light Horse Brigade and was promoted Captain on 10 March 1916.¹⁶

¹² AWM183 Item 41: Biographical Details of Lt Col William Henry Scott.

¹³ National Archives of Australia: World War I Service Record – Major A E Wearne.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ H S Gullet, *The Australian Imperial Force in Sinai and Palestine 1914-1918*, Sydney, 1923, pp 68-70.

¹⁶ National Archives of Australia: World War I Service Record – Major E B Ayris.

Light Horse Squadron

As noted in Table 1, the Light Horse squadron consisted of seven officers and 122 other ranks. The other ranks included 12 members of the 8th Light Horse Regiment who had accompanied Captain Wearne on his reconnaissance to Muiya Harab and four members of the 9th Light Horse Regiment machine gun section to man the Vickers-Maxim gun carried by the force. The squadron included three signallers equipped with a heliograph, Begbie lamp and flags. As this was the first offensive action undertaken by the Australian Light Horse in the Sinai Desert, it was imperative that it be carried out to an entirely successful conclusion. Squadron personnel were specially selected for the operation. Only the lightest men and the fittest horses in the Regiment were taken. All non-essential gear was stripped from personal equipment to lighten the horse's load. The following 9th Light Horse Regiment officers were included in this composite Light Horse squadron:¹⁷

Officer Commanding	Major K A McKenzie
Second in Command	Captain B B Ragless
A Troop Leader	Lieutenant A H H Nelson
B Troop Leader	Lieutenant W S Pender
C Troop Leader	Lieutenant J M McDonald
D Troop Leader	Lieutenant F J Linacre
Machine Gun Officer	Lieutenant L W Jacques



Major K A McKenzie, 1917
(courtesy Mr Ian McKenzie, Canberra)

Major McKenzie was a graduate of the second class of the Royal Military College (RMC), Duntroon. He was commissioned as a Lieutenant on 3 November 1914 and posted to the 9th Light Horse Regiment. He was promoted Captain on 14 September 1915 and Major on 19 March 1916. He served at Anzac from May to September 1915, including some two months as Staff Captain on 3rd Light Horse Brigade Headquarters. At the time of the Jifjafa raid he was 22 years old and a squadron commander in the Regiment.¹⁸

Engineer Detachment

An Australian Engineers detachment, under command of Lieutenant J Coghlan and

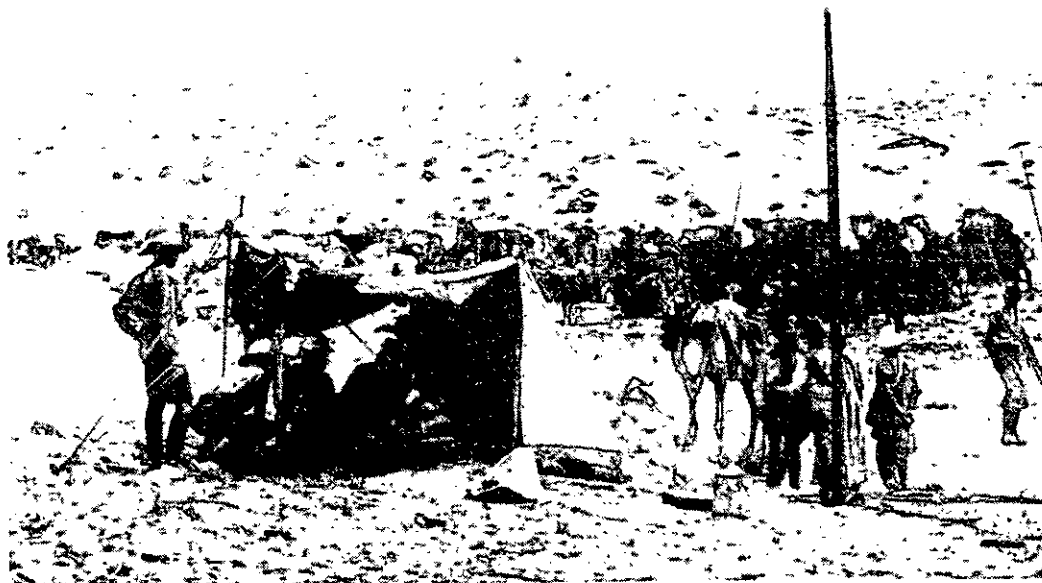
¹⁷ Major T H Darley, *With the Ninth Light Horse in the Great War*, Adelaide, 1924, p 33.

¹⁸ AWM43 Item Biographical Details – Major K A McKenzie.

consisting of nine other ranks drawn from 4th Field Company, 4th Infantry Division, accompanied the raiding force. This detachment had two main duties: provision of water from the cisterns near Moiya Harab and demolition of the drilling plant and bores at Jifjafa.

Lieutenant Coghlan – a 34 year old electrical engineer of Melbourne – enlisted in the AIF on 8 September 1914 and was posted as a sapper to the 3rd Field Company. He was promoted Lance Corporal on 20 March 1915. He served at Gallipoli from 25 April - 25 July 1915. On 26 July 1915, he was transferred to the 4th Field Company and promoted Sergeant. He was commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant on 19 November 1915 and promoted Lieutenant on 17 March 1916.¹⁹

All personnel of this Engineer detachment were mounted on horses provided by the 10th Light Horse Regiment. The detachment's stores were carried on four camels provided by the Camel Transport Corps. It is presumed that these camels travelled with the main camel train. To undertake the field water duties, the detachment carried a hand-operated rotary pump, 20 feet (6 metres) of hose and 40 feet (12 metres) of canvas troughing as the animals were unable to drink directly from the cisterns. Ten shovels and one bale of sandbags were also carried. Gun cotton and other stores for the demolition of the drilling plant and bores were carried on two camels.



Royal Engineers Wireless Detachment, April 1916. Note the camel train halted in the Wadi um Muksheib in the background. AWM P0228/66/25

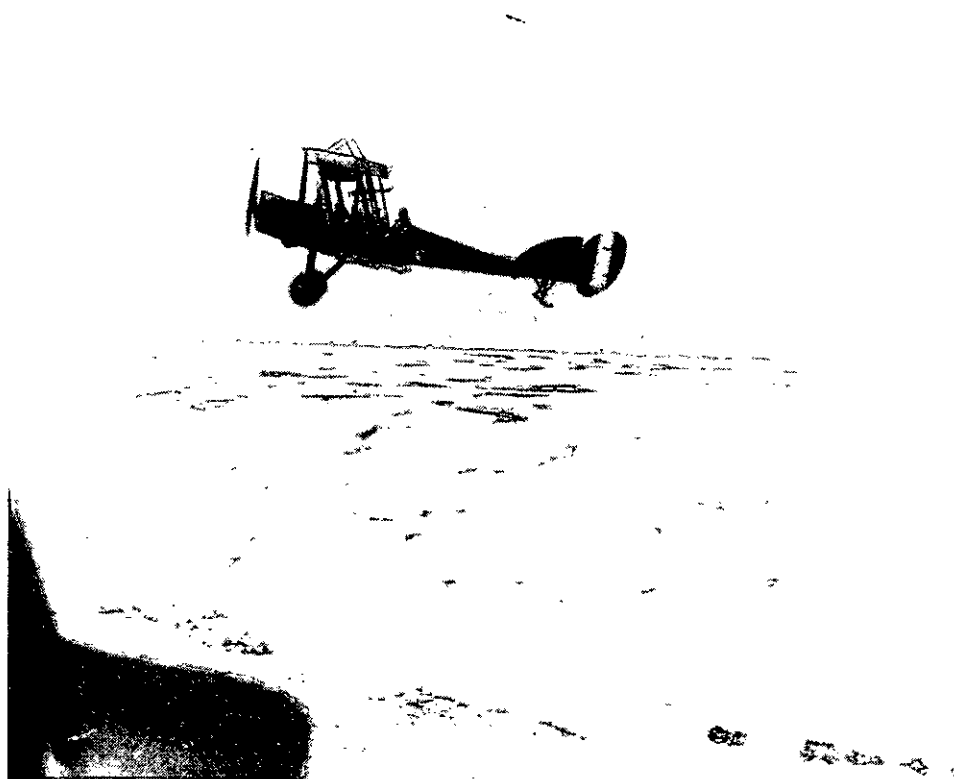
¹⁹ National Archives of Australia: World War I Service Record – Major J Coghlan.

Royal Engineers Wireless Detachment

A self-contained Royal Engineers wireless station consisting of five British other ranks and three Sudanese camel drivers under command of Lieutenant Eggar was provided by General Headquarters, Cairo to enable the raiding column to communicate with Headquarters, 3rd Australian Light Horse Brigade at Serapeum. The wireless station, rations and water for the detachment were carried on fifteen camels provided by the Camel Transport Corps. A riding horse for Lieutenant Eggar was provided by 10th Light Horse Regiment. Presumably, the British other ranks rode camels or walked with the Sudanese camel drivers.

Royal Flying Corps Liaison Party

A Royal Flying Corps detachment of two officers – Lieutenants Snooks and Pitman – and two other ranks was allocated to the raiding column for liaison purposes and to man the 'ground signal apparatus' used to communicate with the supporting aircraft from 14 Squadron RFC. Two horses were provided for the officers by 10th Light Horse Regiment. Two riding camels for the other ranks and two pack camels to carry the signalling equipment were provided by the Camel Transport Corps.



Royal Flying Corps BE2c on patrol over the desert. AWM B01937

Medical Support

Medical support for the operation was provided by a detachment of the 3rd Light Horse Field Ambulance. Personnel consisted of one medical officer, Major E Rowden-White, four mounted bearers and four drivers. Major Rowden-White – a 32 year old Melbourne surgeon – was

commissioned as a Captain in the AIF on 2 October 1914 and posted to the 3rd Light Horse Field Ambulance. Prewar, he had served for three years as a Captain in the 14th Field Ambulance, AMF. He arrived in Egypt on 9 March 1915 and deployed to Lemnos on 21 July 1915. He served at Gallipoli, attached to the 4th Infantry Brigade, from 4 August to 11 September 1915 when he returned to the 3rd Light Horse Field Ambulance on Lemnos. He returned to Egypt on 24 December 1915 and was promoted Major on 1 January 1916.²⁰



Ambulance sandcart at Serapeum, Suez Canal, c. 1916.
Note the wide tyres for movement over soft sand. AWM H00321

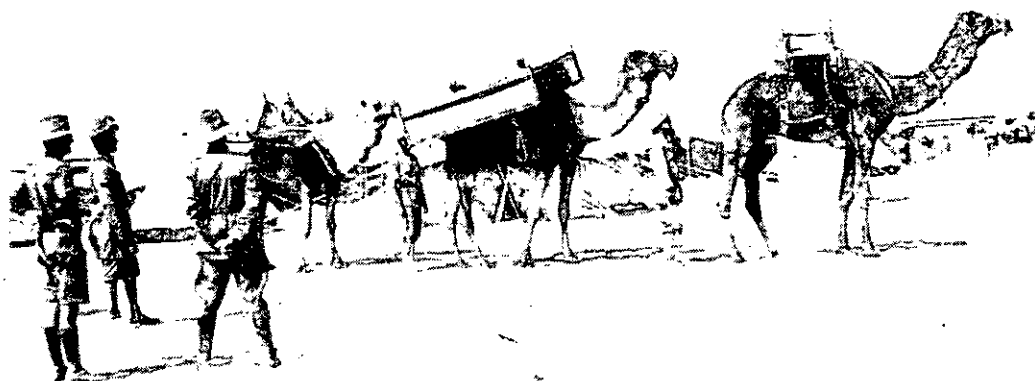
The medical detachment included two sand-carts – light two-wheeled ambulances fitted with wide tyres – each drawn by four horse teams. Six camels completed the medical detachment. One camel was fitted with a lying down cacolet capable of carrying two patients. Four camels were fitted with sitting up cacolets capable of carrying a total of eight patients. The sixth camel carried medical supplies.²¹ Cacolets were canvas supports, stiffened with bamboo, wooden or metal struts and slung one on each side of a camel. Evacuation by cacolet was an experience to be dreaded by a wounded soldier.

The tortures of this mode of conveyance to a wounded man have to be experienced to be believed. When the animal having received its double burden, rises with its peculiar jerk forward, it nearly pitches the patients out of the cacolets. Thereafter, each lurching step of the long, agonising march stretches the unhappy victims upon a species of rack comparable to that of a medieval torture chamber.²²

²⁰ National Archives of Australia: World War I Service Record – Lieutenant Colonel E R White.

²¹ AWM11 Item 1522/2/77 3rd Light Horse Field Ambulance Medical Report on Jif Jaffa Expedition.

²² Lt Col R M P Preston, *The Desert Mounted Corps*, London, 1921.



3rd Australian Light Horse Field Ambulance personnel inspect cacolets, c. April 1916. Two types of lying down cacolets (left and centre) and sitting up cacolet (right). AWM J02619

Camel Transport Corps

A Camel Transport train consisting of one British officer, two British warrant officers, 95 Egyptian drivers and 195 camels was included in the force to carry supplies. Also included in this train for its protection and as additional camel drivers were 29 troopers drawn from the 9th Light Horse Regiment. The Egyptian drivers had to walk the whole distance but the Light Horsemen – who did not bring their horses – were permitted to ride the spare camels and those whose loads had been expended if they had the urge and the skill to do so. However, no riding saddles were provided. It can only be conjectured what the thoughts of this group were. While they trudged along with the camel train; their mounted colleagues were taking part in a free-ranging raid! The 195 camels in the train were allocated loads as follows:

Water	88
Forage -	78
Rations -	15
Ammunition -	4
Spare	10

The large number of camels needed to carry water and forage for a relatively small force on a short duration raid highlights the logistical burden of supporting horse-mounted units in desert warfare. The camel carried a maximum load of 350 pounds (159 kilograms) although 300

pounds (136 kilograms) was the preferred tactical loading.²³ A camel train marched at a pace of 2–2½ miles per hour (3–4 kilometres per hour) depending on the terrain and the threat from enemy aircraft.²⁴ After six hours marching the loads were taken off the camels and they were rested. Any attempt to force the pace caused an unacceptable rate of casualties to the camels. Care had also to be taken that the load was evenly balanced on each side of the pack saddle and that the load did not sit too low causing injury to the camel's ribs or hips.

Water. The 88 water camels carried approximately 2,640 gallons (12,000 litres). This water was carried in copper or galvanised iron tanks (called *fanatis*) holding 15 gallons (68 litres), one being hung on each side of the pack saddle. These tanks had a hole, fitted with a screw plug, at the top for filling and, initially, a small tap at the bottom rear end to facilitate filling water bottles. Later versions of the *fanatis* dispensed with this tap as it contributed to significant leakage.

The water carried was based on the scale of four day's supply for all Australian and British personnel plus one day's supply for the Egyptian camel drivers and horses. The Egyptian drivers, horses and camels had to depend on the water in the cisterns in the Wadi um Muksheib near Moiya Harab after the first day.²⁵ All horsemen deployed with one filled water bottle, one emergency ration and one horse feed.

Forage. 78 camels were allocated to carry the forage used during the operation. At this time, the daily ration for horses and camels was 10 pounds (4.5 kilograms) of grain, usually Egyptian maize, millet or barley, and 12 pounds (5.4 kilograms) of tibben – barley straw chopped into a coarse chaff and compressed. For the Jifjafa raid, the only forage carried was good quality Australian oats and chaff in preference to the local product.²⁶

Ammunition. Each rifleman deployed with 200 rounds of ammunition. 1,500 rounds in belts were carried for the Vickers-Maxim machine gun. 10,000 rounds of reserve ammunition were carried by four camels in the train.

Bikaner Camel Corps

The raiding force included a detachment of one officer (Lieutenant Bhir Singh) and 24 other ranks from the Bikaner Camel Corps (*Ganga Risala*) as escort to the Camel Transport train and for despatch riding. This detachment was drawn from a company of the Corps (four officers and 127 other ranks) which was then under command of the II Anzac Corps. The Bikaner Camel Corps were Imperial Service Troops²⁷; that is, an Indian State unit trained and equipped to a standard that enabled it to take its place in a regular Indian Army force. Bikaner was one of the Rajputana States in north west India – it is now part of Rajasthan. It is renowned for the best riding camels in the world.

Immediately after the outbreak of the war in August 1914, the Maharaja of Bikaner – Colonel His Highness Sir Ganga Singh Bahadur – placed the Bikaner Camel Corps at the disposal of the King-Emperor. (The Maharaja had commanded the Camel Corps himself when it formed part of

²³ Later in the war, transport camels were classified Heavy Burden and Light Burden, capable of carrying a maximum load of 350 pounds (159 kilograms) and 250 pounds (113 kilograms) respectively. This weight is the useful cargo carried and does not include the pack saddle, some forage and the driver's kit.

²⁴ Where the threat from enemy aircraft was high the camels moved in single file well dispersed. This formation slowed the pace of the train. Where the air threat was low the camels marched in a closer block with up to eight camels abreast.

²⁵ 3rd Australian Light Horse Brigade Operation Order No 6.

²⁶ AWM224 MSS36 – 9th Light Horse Regiment Narrative, October 1914–November 1918, p. 8.

²⁷ In 1922 the title was changed to Indian State Forces.

the British contingent in China in 1901.) The Corps, consisting of a headquarters and eight companies and numbering some 1,000 men, was quickly deployed to Egypt. It had the distinction of being the first Imperial troops to engage the enemy in the Egyptian theatre when, on 20 November 1914, a patrol of 20 men was attacked by 200 Turkish Bedouin some 30 kilometres east of Kantara in the Sinai Desert. The Corps continued to serve in Egypt until the end of the war being mainly involved in patrolling in the Western Desert and in the Sinai.

For the Jifjafa operation the Bikaner Camel Corps detachment was self-contained, deploying with five days rations and water carried on the 12 additional camels²⁸ included with that unit.



Member of Bikaner Camel Corps, c. 1916. AWM P0626/14/07

Supplementary Operation Order

On 9 April, Headquarters 3rd Australian Light Horse Brigade issued a supplementary operation order.²⁹ The key elements of this order were:

- Aerial reconnaissance of Jifjafa on 7 and 9 April had failed to detect any enemy troops but tents and stores remained in the vicinity of the post.
- Enemy garrisons which could react to the raid were reported as follows:

²⁸ See Table 1.

²⁹ AWM4 Item 10/3/5 War Diary: 3rd Australian Light Horse Brigade – April 1916

900 troops at Hassana – 65 kilometres east of Jifjafa
50 troops at Berthel Hegaiib – 6 kilometres north of Jifjafa
50 troops at Rodh Salem – 20 kilometres north east of Jifjafa
50 troops at Bir el Hamma – 40 kilometres north east of Jifjafa
200 troops at Nekhl – 80 kilometres south east of Jifjafa

- A good motor road ran from Hassana to a roadhead approximately 15 kilometres north east of Jifjafa.
- IX (British) Corps, holding the southern sector of the Canal defences, would provide a column based on a squadron of Middlesex Yeomanry to patrol east and north east of Suez during the Jifjafa operation with a two-fold aim: to deceive the enemy as to British intentions if either column was sighted by Bedouin agents or Turkish patrols and to protect the southern and rear flanks of the raiding force.
- Wells and other installations considered to be of use for subsequent British operations were to be left undamaged but all moveable stores were to be destroyed or recovered.
- Accurate information on the location and capacity of all wells and other sources of water was to be recorded and samples of water from each were to be brought back. The former task was the responsibility of the 4th Field Company detachment; the latter the responsibility of the Medical detachment.
- 10th Australian Light Horse Regiment was ordered to hold one squadron (120 all ranks) at Serapeum as a ready reaction force should the raiding force require assistance.

Finally, the operational plan called for the force to move initially in two echelons. The slower moving camel train to depart the Railhead Camp five miles (eight kilometres) east of Serapeum after last light on 10 April and to move at best pace to establish a bivouac on the Wadi um Muksheib near Point 850 some 20 kilometres north west of the Moiya Harab cisterns. The faster moving Light Horse squadron and the other horse-mounted elements to depart Railhead Camp mid afternoon 11 April and to rendezvous with the camel train about midnight on the night of 11/12 April at its bivouac near Point 850.

[to be continued]

1918 – The Anatomy of Defeat

Ian D Main¹

For Germany, defeat was a bitter experience. For them, their army was not defeated, but stabbed in the back. In future years, they remembered well their own humiliation. The ending of the 1914–1918 war is rarely well explained. For Australians the usual explanation stops at the Australian victory at Amiens on 8 August, 1918, saying only that it led directly to the armistice in November. By what path, what mechanism, is rarely detailed. Some other stories I have heard include:

- In Greece, the British force on the Austrian(!) border made a breakthrough, and got into the valleys draining to the Danube. This explanation used such phrases as, 'This was the beginning of the end.' and 'Austria sought a separate peace.' Greece proved to be called the Salonika front, and it was on the Bulgarian, not Austrian, border. It was interesting in its own right, but only marginally relevant to our present purpose. One person I mentioned this tale to replied 'Yes, that would be General McDonald. He was on the outer with the establishment at the War Office. That's why he was relegated to that front.'
- Another explanation was that 'The German People had had enough – they didn't want to fight any longer.' This came from a German who was born in 1923.
- Then there was an article by Prior and Wilson that purported to show that England's liberal government under Lloyd George restricted the flow of reinforcements to the front. This in turn forced a higher ratio of artillery fire to assault troops. This is how the liberal English government beat the autocratic German political system. That seemed sillier than most.

It turns out that all of these tales have some validity, they each played some part in the collapse. In fact, there was a sequence of small problem events somewhere in the system, occasional at first, then ever more frequently until the final crash. Because a great number of the individual failures had their roots in 1917 and earlier, it is necessary to review some of the developments during that year.

We tend to use the word 'Armistice' mostly to indicate the end of the war with Germany in November 1918. In fact, it has a general meaning, and I find I have had to refer to no less than five different armistices. Context makes it clear which is which.

The Position at the end of 1916

Germany had two major allies, Austria and Turkey. She also had an interest in Bulgaria. Turkey has very little direct relevance to the present study, but there were two German divisions tied up in Turkish territory, and therefore not available to the western front. Germany, Austria, Turkey and Bulgaria were fighting on a total of six fronts. In clockwise order they were:

1. The Eastern Front, against Russia. Responsibility was shared, Germany being responsible for the northern part, Austria for the south. Romania, as mentioned below was by then included as an occupied state. Germany seems to have had 95 divisions tied up in the east.

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2. The Mesopotamian front, largely Turkish responsibility, but with one German division involved. They faced Russian troops to the north and British to the south.
3. The Palestine front also tied up a German division. It seems to have been a fairly inactive front until mid 1917, when General Allenby was appointed to the command. When he advanced through Palestine and Syria, the Germans transferred the division from Mesopotamia, thus heavily involving both German divisions.
4. The Salonika front. The Bulgarian army faced British, French, and presumably Greek troops, grouped together under the grandiose title of "Army of the Orient". It was regarded as a very low priority on both sides, but the Germans had one division there, and were also subsidising the Bulgarians.
5. The Italian front. For this front, Austria was responsible for the Central Powers, Italy for the allies. However, six English divisions were transferred to that front in late 1917, and two or three German divisions were sent 'to stiffen the Austrians.' Ever since the time of Bismarck, the Germans had an underlying contempt for the Austrian army.
6. The Western Front, the action at which seems so important to us. It ran from the corner of Belgium, where a Belgian army of six divisions was fighting, to the corner with Switzerland. The north western end was the British responsibility, and the south east, French, with a small space within the French front assigned to Americans, who in 1917 were just beginning to build up numbers. One oddity is that, until the end of 1917, the British and French armies were fighting independently, although with fairly good working agreement between Generals Haig and Pétain, if not between governments and people generally. Haig would not accept a French Supreme Commander.

Toward the end of 1917, Pétain lost his nerve and transferred troops contrary to agreement, and Haig withdrew his objection to a unified command, provided it was not under Pétain. This led to the development of a Supreme Command, with General Foch as Fieldmarshal and Supreme Commander. It became effective early in March 1918.

Romania

Up to 1916, Romania had not yet been involved in the war. It was a relatively recent nation, developed on an ethnic basis. Its oilfields had been developed with German money, and naturally supplied Germany's war effort. But in 1916, the Russians on Romania's eastern border were doing fairly well, and Romania saw its future as associated with them as fellow Slavs (and Orthodox Christians). It did have some problems with its western neighbour, and therefore declared war on Austria. The German army, on its northern border, immediately invaded Romania. It was a rather messy operation because they got into mountains where local troops had a big advantage. But they eventually broke through, and over-ran the country. While this was happening, a small British team destroyed the oilfields. Although the Germans tried to restore operations, oil production in the whole of 1917 was only 30% of a normal year's production. By the end of 1917, production was back to about 80% of the pre-war level. Nevertheless it was a serious blow to Germany. Romania remained occupied territory until 1918, when a peace treaty was negotiated.

The Russian collapse

The 'official' date for the Revolution was 25 October, 1917. But it was only on 7 November that Lenin ousted Kerensky, and took direct control of the whole apparatus of government. From our point of view, his key act was to seek an armistice, to which the German General Ludendorff

agreed on 27 November. But the Tsar had abdicated on 5 March, and for the intervening period – over six months – affairs were conducted by a provisional government, headed at first by Prince Lvov. After four months Lvov was replaced by Kerensky, who is often referred to as the last prime minister of Imperial Russia, although with the Emperor gone, one may question the word 'Imperial'.

In the army, all officers were, of course, sworn to the service of the Tsar, and without the Tsar, their position was somewhat uncertain. The result was that for the period between the abdication and Lenin's coup, the army carried on by its own very considerable inertia and the imperatives of the war. Decisions that would have been the prerogative of the Tsar were made by the provisional government. They were not always made to the liking of the general staff.

When, early in November, Lenin sought armistice, he spoke of peace 'without reparations, without annexations,' but things were not so easy. A number of subject peoples had already put out feelers about separating from Russia. Treaty negotiations eventually started at Brest-Litovsk on 22 December, 1917. The negotiators were German Foreign Minister von Kühlmann and the general officer commanding on the eastern front, General Hoffmann; for Austria, Foreign Minister Czernin, and for Russia, the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Joffe. There was a break for Christmas, and on resumption on 8 January, 1918, Leon Trotsky appeared in place of Joffe. During the Christmas break, Livonia (now Latvia) had declared its independence on 30 December, and on 6 January, Germany recognised the new independent Finnish government of Svinhufvud. On 27 January, Estonia also declared its independence.

1918 – The Russian Peace Treaty and its Consequences

With the Russian armistice, things were expected to immediately become easier in the east, with transfer of lots of troops to the western front. But no! Forty two divisions of troops were transferred immediately, but until the peace treaty was signed, it was necessary to keep an effective force on the eastern front. Germany had fifty three divisions, by some estimates a million troops, still tied up on that front at this critical time.

When negotiations started at Brest-Litovsk, the Russians quibbled about many details, often referring them to Moscow, eventually, in February, Germany asked quite bluntly whether they wanted a peace treaty at all. They referred this question to Moscow, too, and Moscow replied with a comment that they could start fighting again. This proved too much for the Germans, who responded by occupying Livonia, and Estonia (Lithuania was already occupied), and also the Ukraine as far as the Dnieper and Odessa, thus shifting much of the front line a long way east.

At this stage Moscow got the message, but apparently the Russian navy at Odessa didn't, because they proceeded to scuttle many of their own ships rather than hand them over, and for good measure also scuttled their largest oil tanker. So Germany went on and occupied the Crimean peninsula, and a bit beyond, including part of the Kuban. At the time, the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk was regarded as extremely harsh, a 'robbers treaty'. From our point of view, this unscheduled occupation of territory simply overstressed the German military system further.

All of this secured for Germany the supply of wheat from the Ukraine, the coal from the Donetz basin, and perhaps tobacco from the Kuban. Ludendorff then heard that there was a British force in the oilfield at Baku, so he then despatched part of the German army further east to secure Caucasian oil. Certainly he needed it, but again it tied up troops. In any case, he was too late. It was intended to ship Ukrainian wheat and coal and Caspian oil supplies up the Danube to Ulm. When the Bulgarian army sought armistice it opened up the right bank of the Danube to French and British troops.

All this was spread over eight months of the year 1918, and constitutes background to the main action.

1918 – The Main Event

Against this background, the German Supreme Command (OHL = Oberste Heeresleitung) clearly had its hands full. There had, in 1917, been some thoughts of a peace treaty, a 'peace of understanding,' which would allow Germany some honour, and perhaps give Germany access to Belgian ports, which had always been part of the Grand Design. This peace concept was not very popular, but the Foreign Minister had kept some lines of communication open through embassies in neutral countries. The alternative was to end the war with a major offensive while they still had some superiority of troops (192 divisions, including those transferred from the eastern front, against 176 Allied), and while they still had enough oil.

The key actor was General Erich von Ludendorff. He was noted as a very thorough strategist. Although he was junior to Hindenburg, who had been made Chief of General Staff, it was he who was to decide how best to attack the allies. His official title was 'First Quartermaster General'. Ludendorff occupied the winter of 1917-18 by having some 12 different possible plans of attack studied in depth. He came to the conclusion that his best option, codenamed St Michael, was to attack the British at the end of their line nearest the French. There are several suggestions as to what was in Ludendorff's mind. One was that it would drive a wedge between the British and French and perhaps reach the sea. Their assessment was that, if they defeated the British, the French would collapse, but if they attacked and defeated the French, the British would still fight on.

This was to be Ludendorff's 'king hit', and he named it *Kaiserschlacht*, the Emperor's Battle. He divided his troops into three groups. The first he called storm troops. They were fairly lightly armed, and were to advance rapidly, by-passing any resistance points, gaining territory as quickly as possible. The second group, who had heavier arms including artillery, were called assault troops. Their role was to attack these resistance points and if possible occupy them. The third group was to clean up, secure the new fronts thus created and dig in. The attack started on 21 March, 1918, and the storm troops advanced fairly steadily until the 29th, then a bit more on 5 April. In all, they gained about 40 miles (65 km), before they ran out of steam. It was significant, but they had another 100 miles or so before they reached the sea.

Then, on 9 April they attacked the British near the Belgian border, the Battle of the Lys. Again on 27 May, this time against the French (Chemin des Dames) and later again against the French, at Montdidier on 9 June. Each was one of the winter studies, and each gained ground, but none was comparable with Operation Michael.

In June there were two other events to mention. In the first, the Kaiser held a small party on 14 June to celebrate completion of the 30th year of his reign. In it he responded to a toast by pointing out that they were involved in a war between two world systems. He described his own as a 'Prusso-German-Teutonic system of justice, freedom, honour, and morality,' as against that of the enemy as 'in the end, little more than worshipping the golden calf.' I mention this because in it we are seeing things through German eyes, a rare experience.

The next day, the 15th, the Germans attacked at Rheims on the French front, commencing at 4.30 am. The Kaiser was taken straight from the party to a suitable bunker to watch the opening barrage. But the attack was not a success. It gained very little ground that day. But worse befell three days later. A mixed force of French and Americans burst out of a nearby forest (Cotterêts),

in a flank attack, and the net result of this major German offensive was a three mile retreat to the River Vesle.

The next significant action in France was the British counter-attack at Amiens on 8 August, so well known in Australian legend. From the German point of view, of course, it was a fiasco. As soon as the Kaiser heard about it he suggested that the war should be brought to an end as soon as may be. That was on 10 August. But perhaps even more seriously, the German Army *knew* it was losing. From then on, both French and British made advances fairly regularly, each time gaining a few miles and pausing to regroup, resupply, and go on again.

The most serious obstacle to the British advance was called the Hindenburg Line. It was well planned, based on a canal, and it gave our troops pause, but they soon found a weakness, attacked, and broke through. This was on 29 September. After that the Kaiser said, 'Well, the war is over, and not in the way we foresaw.' He added a remark that the politicians had not been very helpful. This may have been triggered by the resignation of the Chancellor, von Hertling, the day before.

German Civil Government

This brings us to a consideration of the German civil government. The Reichstag was an elected house, where the political parties were all small, usually based in part on the local interests of the former principalities that amalgamated to constitute Germany. Loyalties were fairly constant, but not quite certain. Within this there was one coterie, perhaps from several parties, called the War Aims Group, whose common purpose was victory at any price. The house also included representatives of at least five, perhaps seven, different Socialist parties in two groups, the Majority Socialists (also referred to as the Majority Bloc) who were involved in government, and the Independent Socialists, who, although in parliament, did not take part in government. They did not want to be involved because they felt that it would be to some extent bolstering up a system whose collapse they expected and very much desired. (A further group, the Spartacists, were not represented in parliament. They were entirely devoted to revolution Russian style, and their leaders, Kurt Liebknecht and Rosa Luxembourg, were in gaol for sedition.)

In July 1918, the Foreign Minister, Baron von Kühlmann, making a speech in the Reichstag, suggested that peace might not depend entirely on military decisions. This was enough for the War Aims people, who howled for his blood. In this they were abetted by the Socialists, all of whom thought that he should have heeded Lenin's 'no reparations, no annexations' in the Brest-Litovsk Treaty. The two groups together were enough to bring von Kühlman down, and he was forced to resign. His replacement was von Hinze. Then, at the end of September, the Chancellor resigned. There was a problem in nominating a successor. Eventually the choice fell on a Bavarian royal prince distantly related to the Kaiser – Max, Prince of Baden. (He is usually referred to as either Max or Prince Max. Where von Baden is used, it is a description, not a surname, and translated as 'of Baden'.)

Meanwhile, the allies kept advancing. The last battle I have noted was Le Cateau on 4 November, but by then the real action lay elsewhere. It had been left to the civilian authorities to arrange for an armistice. It was feared that, if the army sought peace, the enemy might realise how weak the army was, and demand an ignominious surrender. They thought the armistice would save face.

Negotiations

Let us go back to the Amiens debacle, on 8 August. It was followed on the German side by a military conference on 10 August at Spa, the German Supreme Headquarters. At it, a report from the Military Attaché in Vienna, General Cramon, was read, to the effect that the Austrian Emperor Karl had said that they should make peace in 1918, and if they did not, he would make a separate peace. Then there was a political conference at Spa on 14th, at which the position was summarised as: We are unable from a military standpoint to break the fighting spirit of our opponents, and are forced to consider the military situation in the further conduct of our policies; diplomatic feelers with reference to an understanding with the enemy must be thrown out at the appropriate moment. Such a moment would present itself after the next success in the west; the Supreme Army Command asserts that it will be possible to maintain a footing on French territory and thereby eventually force our will upon our enemy.

This may seem to be having it both ways. It seems they expected a negotiated peace treaty on fairly favourable terms.

This conference was followed, both that day and the next, (14 and 15 August) by a conference at which the Austrian Emperor Karl and his minister Count Burian were present. The Austrians proposed to start negotiations immediately by a direct approach to the enemy. While the Germans agreed to negotiations in principle, they wanted to wait for a favourable moment, that is to say, when the German army had had a military success. They also would prefer to act through a neutral intermediary. The German Kaiser favoured negotiating through the King of Spain or the Queen of Holland. They sought an armistice, which would let them retreat to a shorter defence line, as against abject surrender. Also, they believed that they were entitled to keep Belgium, that no country would refuse them that!

That was the start of another fiasco. Each side then acted as though its views had been accepted by the other. Austria went ahead and approached Turkey and Bulgaria on the 19th, and on 21 August presented Germany with the text of a note it intended to send out, suggesting peace negotiations. The Germans were horrified, and after appeal, the Austrians agreed to hold fire for a few days. They were, of course, waiting for the German army to win another battle. It never did. This row continued for a month, each side restating its case and not listening to the other, or rather, not giving an inch. Eventually, on 14 September, Austria announced to the press that she had opened peace negotiations. It later appeared that Austria had sought to find a suitable neutral intermediary, as Germany had suggested, and failed. This episode took till the end of September.

In the mean time, on 15 September, on the Salonika front, the allied 'Army of the Orient' began an offensive. German headquarters had previously directed that a further six divisions be released from the Ukraine, and sent to the west. The natural route included train travel through Bulgaria up the valley of the Danube. On 19 September they were ordered to detrain near Sophia. They were too late. The Bulgarian army was clearly overwhelmed, and on the 19th it sought an armistice. On 30 September, the Bulgarian Government signed a peace treaty. (One document from German archives suggests that the Germans were there, not so much to save a Bulgarian collapse, but to rescue the Bulgarian King Ferdinand from his own Government.)

We now go back to the story of the German armistice. On 3 October Germany, in the person of Foreign Minister von Hinze, cabled US President Woodrow Wilson, seeking conditions for peace, and suggesting the 'fourteen points' of his State of the Nation address to Congress in January, 1918. These fourteen points were very idealistic, and in any case were more suitable as a basis for permanent peace rather than a basis for armistice. Wilson, perhaps flattered, took

some time to reply, and his reply, received on 8 October, was rather vague and idealistic. The Germans, however, saw it as an opportunity to disengage their army and regroup and re-equip. They therefore cabled back on 12 October accepting them.

The trouble was that Wilson, in formulating his reply, had neglected to consult his allies, and when they heard about it, both the French Premier, Clemenceau, and the English Prime Minister, Lloyd George, separately advised Wilson that their countries could not conclude peace on those terms. There were other problems, too. Many German units, withdrawing through the French countryside, had inflicted wanton damage on the villages they passed through. Furthermore, on 10 October, two passenger ships had been torpedoed off the Irish coast, with the loss of over 800 civilian lives, mostly women and children. France and Britain saw these actions as barbaric, and said they refused to deal with a polity that permits such acts. They demanded a complete change of government in Germany. This, of course, played into the hands of the Socialist parties, especially the revolutionaries.

So on 14 October, Wilson passed a second note to Germany that made two points. First, Germany would deal with military authorities for details of a cease-fire, and secondly, the Allies would not deal with a government whose armed forces committed such atrocities. On this last point, however, the Germans were able to show that they had a new Chancellor, Prince Max, as well as a new Foreign Minister, von Hinze. The Navy now sent a signal to all U-boats, recalling them and forbidding further mercantile warfare. So, on the 20th, Germany sent Wilson a second reply.

Wilson's third note, received in Germany on 23 October, was brief and to the point. The terms of the armistice would not be negotiable, and Germany would be left defenceless. But there were other matters relevant to the issue. Ludendorff had attempted to dictate to Max the terms of his reply to the second note. As a result of this, and perhaps other incidents, Max told the Kaiser that there was not enough room at the helm for both Max and Ludendorff. As a result, on 26 October, the Kaiser asked Ludendorff for his resignation.

Matters now went from bad to worse. Prince Max contracted Spanish Flu, and was out of action until 3 November. During this time both Turkey and Austria signed separate armistice agreements. Bulgaria had already signed a peace treaty on 30 September, so Germany was on its own. Also, on 29 October, Admiral von Speer ordered elements of the fleet to sea, but as soon as they sailed, the crews mutinied, and sailed back into port, some ships displaying a Communist red flag. Rebellious crews were ordered to Kiel to isolate them, but there the rebellion took further hold. By 6 November, mutiny had spread to Hamburg and Hanover.

Also, about this time the leader of the Spartacist movement, Kurt Liebknecht, who had been jailed for sedition, was released, and the Spartacists judged that it was now a good time for a full scale revolution. They first chose Monday, 4 November, and set about getting the other socialists to agree. They mounted strikes and demonstrations, and generally disrupted civil life. But they found that the 4th was too soon, and they deferred it by a week, to the 11th.

On 5 November, Wilson sent a message that the Allies had agreed to peace on the general basis of the fourteen points, and that the Allied Supreme Commander, Marshal Foch was authorised to arrange an armistice. The German government, with a revolution developing, wasted no time. On the 6th, a small group of officials travelled to German Supreme Command Headquarters at Spa, and through them arranged an immediate meeting with Foch. This was done and, at 12 noon on Thursday, 7 November, four delegates left Spa for France by car. They were Secretary of State Erzberger, (chairman and representing Prince Max), Minister Count Oberndorff, Major General von Winterfeld, and Naval Captain Vanselow. They also took Army Captain von Helldorf, an interpreter, and two secretaries.

They passed through the lines, changed to French cars, and later to a railway train, went to a small siding in the forest of Compiègne, behind the French lines towards Paris, and arrived early on Friday 8 November. They faced Marshal Foch, his deputy, General Weygand, and the British Admiral Sir Rosslyn Wemyss, First Sea Lord, and another admiral, George Hope. Foch left the Germans in no doubt that the terms offered were not negotiable. They included surrender of 5,000 guns, 25,000 machine guns, 3,000 trench mortars, 2,000 aircraft, 5,000 locomotives, 150,000 railway wagons, 5,000 motor lorries, and also 6 battlecruisers, 10 battleships, 6 light cruisers, and 50 modern destroyers, the ships to be taken to a British port and left there with only "care and maintenance" crews on board. The armistice conditions also included a clause mentioning that reparations may be required. Provided that they signed before the deadline – which was noon local time on Monday the 11th – hostilities would end at that time.

The Germans had von Helldorf carry the text of these conditions back to Spa (and then send it to Berlin). There followed a wait – anxious, not because they feared rejection, but because of the time limit set. It caused problems in Spa, where it was perceived as unrealistic. It demanded, for instance, 2,000 aeroplanes. There were only 1,700 in existence. More of a problem, if they delivered up the railway rolling stock required, food distribution within Germany would be impossible, and famine would follow.

But more was happening in Berlin. During the week, 4 to 8 November, several efforts were made to get the Kaiser to abdicate, and Prince Max announced from Spa that he had decided to do so, but in fact he did not. Eventually, on Saturday the 9th, Prince Max sought to pass the Chancellorship to Friedrich Ebert, the leader of the Majority Socialists. It had no legal standing, but it allowed Ebert to wear the hat when useful. As part of the Revolution, Ebert was also Chairman of the Council of Six established to co-ordinate administration. In the event, the Revolution occurred over the weekend, with Sunday the 10th, the day that the Council of Six actually took control, as the nominal date of the Revolution. But when asked to approve the terms of the Armistice that day, Ebert signed as Chancellor.

The answer was received at Compiègne at 8 pm on Sunday the 10th, accepting these conditions, but adding a rider as to the practicability of some of the demands. After conveying the comments as to practicality to the Allied team, all four Germans signed the armistice instrument, and next day, at noon local time, hostilities ended. One German record says 11.55 am. It was, of course, 11 am in London, the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month, and that is the detail we were all taught. It was 9 pm in Canberra.

Epilogue

Late on Saturday, 9 November, the Kaiser left Spa by car with a small retinue of perhaps half a dozen personal staff. The cars arrived at Eyschen, or Eijschen, on the Dutch border in the early hours of Sunday the 10th. They had some difficulty waking the Dutch border guards, but after some delay were allowed to cross the border. They then dismissed the cars, and took the next train to the railway village of Maarn, where the Kaiser phoned and sought hospitality of Count Bentinck, who lived at Amerongen, a more rural village a few miles away. Bentinck, it is said, asked, 'For how many?' 'About thirty.' 'Not possible,' said Bentinck, and put the receiver down.

The Kaiser then re-thought the matter, and after a while rang again and sought Bentinck's help as a fellow Knight of the Order of St John. Bentinck agreed to accept him personally, and in due course his wife, who had a heart problem. Bentinck offered him a suite of four rooms in his home, Amerongen House. His staff were to find their own accommodation at the village.

On 28 November, a delegation arrived at Amerongen House from Berlin. They asked the Kaiser to sign a formal abdication, which had been prepared for him. He read it, agreed, and signed. He had little choice.

In the mean time, Ludendorff had got away from Germany by wearing a false beard and dark glasses. He went through Denmark to Sweden. He returned to Germany in 1920.

Erzberger, the man who signed the armistice document, was not so lucky. For a few months his star rose spectacularly. He became Finance Minister and Vice-Chancellor. But there was a strong swell of resentment, especially by a group called 'The Disinherited of 1918.' Eventually, on 26 August 1919, in a second attempt while he was recuperating from the first, he was assassinated.

And while all this was happening in the north, in southern Bavaria at the pleasant little town of Traunstein, there was a prisoner of war camp holding Russian prisoners that the Communists were slow to repatriate. One member of the army unit guarding them was Obergefreiter Adolf Hitler.

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Captain C W Robertson RMLI

Major R S Billett MA

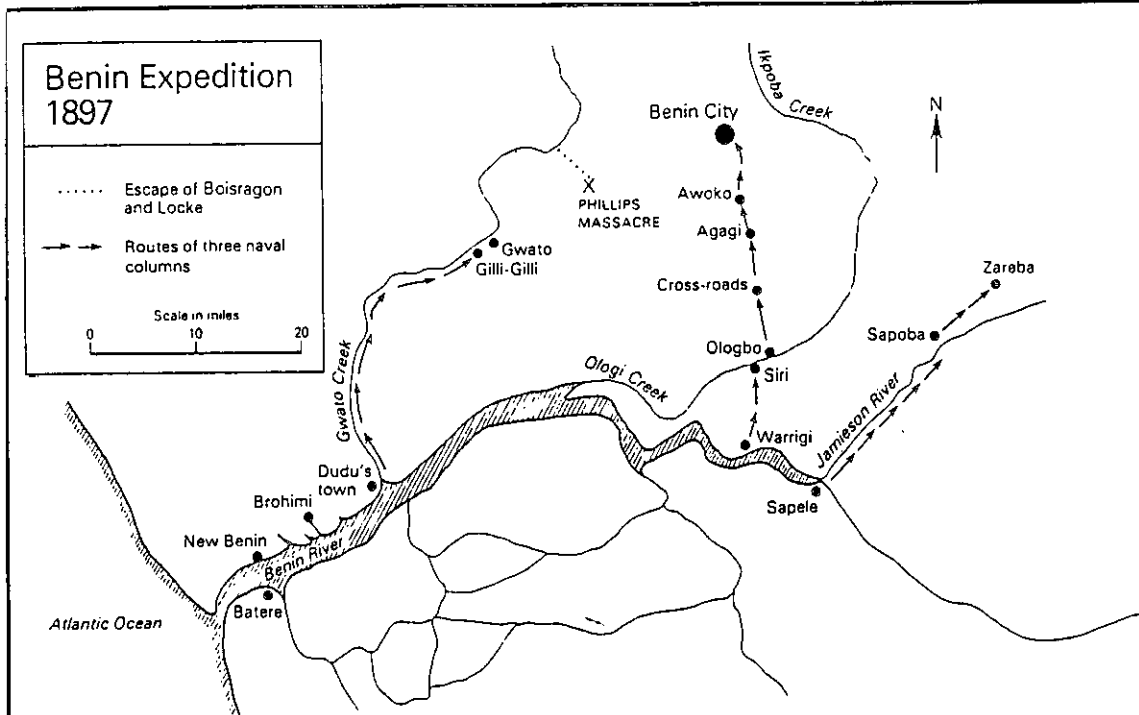
Some time ago Royal Marines Historical Society member, Jim Finney, wrote to me asking if I could locate a memorial to Captain C. W. Robertson who was killed in action during the Boer War. I was able to confirm that his name was not recorded on the Australian memorials to those who served, or died, at the war, but I was able to locate a reference to a memorial in Charterhouse School's cloisters. Robertson had served in the Benin punitive expedition in 1897, and was serving aboard HMS *Katoomba* at Sydney, New South Wales (NSW) when the Boer War started. Recently a friend, Dr Ross Bastiaan, OAM, RFD, a Melbourne periodontist, military historian and sculptor, told me he was going to place some commemorative plaques at significant Boer War sites in South Africa. Members may have seen some of his work on the Western Front and Gallipoli battlefields. I asked him if he would photograph Robertson's grave if he went to Rustenburg. Claude William Robertson is buried in the graveyard at Rustenburg, South Africa. A Royal Marines badge adorns his headstone, but this son of empire died in action commanding a squadron of an Australian mounted unit against the Boers at Magato Pass on Kusters River, 22 July 1900. Robertson had previous active service in the Benin Punitive Expedition in 1897, for which he was mentioned in despatches.

I knew little of the Benin expedition; there is only a sketch, 'Bush Fighting at Benin', in Colonel C Field's *Britain's Sea-Soldiers*. Robertson was also given a brief mention, a few words about his going to South Africa as an instructor with a NSW unit, in the same volume. With the Corps' recent return to active duty in West Africa, just over a century later, it seemed appropriate to write a few words about the Benin expedition, and about Robertson's untimely death in South Africa.

The story begins late in 1896, when Mr J. R. Phillips was acting Consul-General of the Niger Coast Protectorate during the absence of Sir Ralph Moor, who was on leave in London. The refusal of the King of Benin to allow trade, even though a treaty had been made three years prior, with the coast, was seen as an affront to the authority of the colonial administration. It seems that Phillips was out to make a name for himself during the time he was Acting Consul-General, by opening fresh negotiations with the recalcitrant King. Towards the end of the year, Phillips advised the Foreign Office of his intention to visit the King of Benin, and deal with him. His original party was to have included 150 Lagos Hausas, and a detachment of the Niger Coast Protective Force (NCPF) equipped with two seven-pounders, one Maxim gun and a rocket apparatus. When the despatch conveying Phillips' intentions reached London, it was passed to Moor, for his information. He endorsed his deputy's intentions and suggested a gunboat and marines reinforce the proposed expedition. However, the Colonial Secretary was unwilling to release troops for the expedition. There was little activity at Whitehall over the Christmas-New Year holiday, it was not until 8 January 1897 that a telegram was sent to Phillips instructing him to postpone the expedition for another year. This message arrived too late; Phillips was already dead before the cable was sent. Phillips may have been informed by some other means of the prevailing attitude in Whitehall, because prior to his departure, he did reduce the number of troops in his party and sent the NCPF band back to Sapele, in case their uniforms and swords should alarm the King. The officers of the NCPF that accompanied the expedition were advised they could take their revolvers, but they must remain packed in the baggage.

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The Benin area, 1897 (after Robert Home, *City of Blood Revisited*).

Phillips' expedition to King Overami of Benin, commenced from Sapele, on 2 Jan 1897. This mission was not a religious crusade, it was an attempt to get the King to open up the Edo tribal lands to British traders, and submit to British rule. King Overami was hostile to this idea. A few years before the Itsikeri Chief, Nana of Brohimi, and others, had been captured and taken into exile, never to return to their native lands. Three years had passed since white men had visited Benin City. Phillips sent a messenger to the King advising him of his peaceful intentions. Overami replied that they were not to come; he was busy with the Ague festival. This festival, which involved sacrifices, was held to mark the planting of the new season's yams. The King's reply basically meant he was not, or did not want to be, available.

A local Itsikeri Chief, Dogho, advised Phillips that it would be suicide to proceed. Phillips had already advised the King that his party was unarmed and consisted of only nine white men and about 150 local carriers. King Overami held a meeting with his chiefs at which he announced that he did not want the white men killed. The chiefs overruled the King and sent a war party to Egbini to ambush Philip's expedition. Ominously, the chief responsible for sacrificial victims accompanied the war party. A party of Edo warriors had been at Egbini to prepare ambush sites some days before Phillips arrived. Their strategy was to cut an 'ambush road' over a distance of one mile parallel to the main track from Gwato Creek, to Benin City. This creek is a tributary of the Benin River, and provided the most direct route from the coast to Benin City. In the ambush position, the muzzles of the Edo guns almost reached the main track. The Edo warriors were well concealed in the dense rain forest. When the ambush was activated at 4 p.m. on 4 January, Phillips was the first to die, his last words were 'No revolvers, gentlemen, please'.¹ Only two of the nine white men escaped, Captain A. M. Boisragon, Royal Irish Regiment, seconded to the

¹ Robert Home, *City of Blood Revisited*, Rex Collings, London, 1982, p.44.

NCPF, and R. F. Locke, an official of the Niger Coast Protectorate. They evaded their pursuers and made their way down the Gwato Creek to safety.

The two survivors bearing the sad news of the fate of the rest of the expedition arrived at Sapele on 7 January. A cable was immediately despatched to the Foreign Office. It contained Boisragon's report that all the others had been killed, but we will revisit this later. At a Cabinet meeting on 12 January, the army proved reluctant to act because of the expense of mounting an expedition and the difficulties that could be anticipated. However, the Admiralty was far more confident and appointed Rear-Admiral Harry Rawson, commanding the squadron at the Cape of Good Hope, to lead an expedition to take Benin City. On receipt of this news, Admiral Rawson advised the Admiralty that he could take Benin in six weeks.

Rawson's plan was to put 1200 men ashore. Bluejackets were to be provided from HM Ships, *St George*, *Theseus* and *Forte*, plus the marines brought from England aboard the *Malacca*, to supplement the 300 troops from the NCPF. The main NCPF force commanded by Major B. M. Hamilton was to leave the base at Warrigi, on the north bank of the Benin River, and cut their way through the forest to Benin City, a distance of over thirty miles. Two diversionary columns were to deploy, one on the west flank, to Gwato, the other to Sapoba on the east flank. It was anticipated that the column on the west would engage the Edo soldiers defending the road from Gwato to Benin City. The other column advancing on Sapoba was to act as a blocking force to prevent fugitives escaping into surrounding peaceful districts.² After consultation with Moor, who had by then returned to his post, Rawson reduced the size of the landing force to 700 men, (260 NCPF, the remainder RN & RM). A decision Rawson was later to regret. Moor, wanting to take as large a share of credit as possible for the capture of Benin City, for his own NCPF troops and himself, had recommended the reduction. Unfortunately, Moor totally underestimated the fighting ability of the Edo warriors. Major Roche RMLI from *St George*, was to command the Marine Battalion, composed mainly of the marines from the hospital ship, *Malacca*.

Four river steamers had been hired from British and German trading companies, to carry the force up the tidal rivers to their respective jumping off points. This took most of 9 and 10 February. It was during this phase of the operations that the expedition sustained its first casualty. Marine Mills from *Theseus* died from heat stroke on the evening of 10 February. He had been in the sun all day wearing a heavy uniform. He was placed into a makeshift coffin made from butter boxes. This was covered with the Union Jack and taken by canoe to the small European cemetery at Sapele, for burial.

Late on 10 February, the main Naval landing party marched up to Siri.³ For the next two days heavy fighting took place between the Edo and the three columns. Arriving at Siri, the main force found that the river was too wide to cross by the suspension bridge that they had brought with them. A river launch and two surfboats were brought up the Benin River to ferry the force up to the village of Ologbo from where they could start their approach on Benin City; 24 miles away.

Once across the river, the force again came under constant attack from hostile Edo tribesmen hidden in the dense rainforest. This harassment continued along the entire route to Benin City. Luckily the Edo's guns were mainly old muzzle-loading muskets, known as 'Dane guns'. A legacy of long established trade in the area with Europeans, since first, the Portuguese, then English traders, arrived in the Benin Bight during 1553. A rich cargo of pepper was obtained from Benin in that year. Later, as the main body made the final approach on Benin City, the

² See Homes, 1982, p. 62.

³ Often written as Cere on early maps.

expedition came under fire from old smooth bore cannon loaded with nails, stones and bits of metal. Benin had a long tradition of casting bronze and gold artefacts, so there was plenty of metal available for the purpose.

Admiral Rawson had once more to revise his plans when it was learned that the two diversionary columns were met by determined stands by the Edo warriors, and both had to call for reinforcements. To meet this request Rawson had to call up reserves from the fleet, at anchor in the Bight. He also had to call up more ammunition, water, and more carriers. In the bush fighting encountered during the approach march, there had been a very high rate of ammunition usage. Clean water was not available, so river water was boiled and carried forward to the advancing troops. The reinforcements arrived at Warrigi on 14 February, and as soon as they joined the main force, the advance continued. On 17 February. The lack of available water became more acute and meant that supplies had to be carried on the heads of porters, and men from the depleted column's strength. This forced Rawson to change his plans again. He had intended to assault Benin City with 800 men, but the water resupply problem forced him to reduce his main attack force down to a flying column of 560 men. There was a precedent for Rawson's decision; Sir Garnet Wolsey had done the same during the Ashanti War at the attack on Kumasi in 1873.⁴

By early morning on 18 February, all was ready for the final assault. Hamilton had brought up the maxims, seven-pounders, and the rocket apparatus. From near the mud-brick wall that surrounded the city, three rockets, and four shells were fired at maximum elevation into the main compounds. Two of these rockets hissing loudly, fell into a compound near the King's palace. This caused panic within the city, and hundreds of the Edo inhabitants assembled there, fled in panic to the surrounding bush.

There were plenty of warriors remaining in the city to give the flying column a hot reception. Rawson had formed his leading element in a loose square formation, and gave the order to advance. Fighting their way up the main avenue leading to the King's palace to time, the red tunics of the RMLI provided the Edo with many targets and casualties began to mount. Ten marines including Captain Byrne fell wounded. Near the palace the Edo made their last stand and again fired their obsolete cannon into the ranks of the advancing column. Rawson then gave the order for the final assault, and Bugler Allen, of the marines, promptly sounded the charge. At the same time Hamilton's improvised composite battery fired off all its weapons to encourage the marines in the final encounter. Benin City had been taken, and it's King and most of his followers were fugitives running headlong through the forest as fast as they could to get away from the victors.

Benin City was not a pretty sight when it fell. The basis of Edo religion rested on human sacrifice and fetish worship. In the city there were seven large sacrifice compounds, each enclosed within high walls. Within these compounds were altars, up to 50 feet long, covered with dried human blood. The altars were adorned with fetish gods, made from upright carved ivory tusks, mounted in hideous brass heads. In a report by Consul-General Moor on the state of the city on 18 February it is recorded that, 'the populace sat around in these huge compounds while the Ju-Ju priests performed the sacrifices for their edification.'⁵ British Parliamentary Papers (BPP) for 1898 contain the published papers on the expedition. A word of warning is appropriate here. Many of the reports sent back by the men on the spot were sanitised by their authors. There is also good reason to believe that the official record in the BPP may also have been changed, to make the content more palatable. Among the contemporary official reports, the

⁴ For a short account on the Ashanti campaign, James Morris's, *Heaven's Command*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1980, pp. 398-404, is recommended.

⁵ Sir W. N. Geary, *Nigeria under British Rule*, Methuen, London, 1927, pp. 116-7.

one sent by the Principle Medical Officer to Moor, dated 13 March, and contains a very clear eyewitness account of the scene at Benin City. It is worth including this in full:

Sir,

I have the honour to submit a brief Report on the sanitary condition of Benin City on the day of its capture, the 18th February 1897.

On the principle "sacrifice tree," facing the main gates of the King's compound, there were two sacrifices (crucifixions), and lying around the foot of the tree there were seventeen, newly decapitated bodies, in various stages of decomposition. On the "sacrifice tree" to the west of the main entrance a woman was crucified, and at the foot of the tree four decapitated and eviscerated bodies were found. On going westwards, towards the plain leading to the Gwato road, a sickening sight was met with. One hundred and seventy-six human sacrifices and decomposing bodies were found, the stench from which was so intolerable that the sanitary gang under my supervision had on more than one occasion to beat a hasty retreat.

In the portion of city to the south of the plain I came across five sacrifices (decapitations with terrible mutilations), and in the compounds in the rear of the King's Palace six more were found. On the main road, leading eastward from the principal gate, eleven newly decapitated bodies were found. A little further on, and close to the entrance of the path from Ologbo, seven bodies were found, killed by gunshot wounds. These evidently fell in the action of 18 February. All the above mentioned [the seven gunshot victims only] were decently buried, besides upwards of 300 skeletons.

In various parts of the city, but principally in the immediate vicinity of the King's compound, huge pits were found (12 to 15 feet in diameter and 40 to 50 feet deep), seven of which contained human sacrifices, from fifteen to twenty in each pit, the dead and dying were intermingled in these frousome holes. Several unfortunate captives were rescued with great difficulty, and are now progressing favourably, with the exception of one poor creature, who, I am afraid, will remain an imbecile for the rest of his life. After all the living had been rescued the pits were filled with earth.

The day after our arrival here nearly all the European officers, and a great number of the native troops and carriers, suffered acutely from a form of epidemic diarrhoea, caused by inhaling the putrid atmosphere, which, I am pleased to say, has entirely passed away, and the general health is now extremely good. The sanitary condition of the city is, at present, all that could be desired under the circumstances.⁶

I have, &c.

(Signed) R ALLMAN, PMO

The numbers included in the report above amount to a total of about 663 bodies, if the 300 skeletons are included in the count. One of the survivors found alive in the sacrifice pits was a servant of Thomas Gordon, a member of Phillip's party. His evidence, and that of other native carriers from the ambushed diplomatic mission, cast doubt on Captain Boisragon's report of the ambush. Over one hundred of the native carriers were captured and taken to the city. Boisragon reported that during the ambush he ran to find his revolver, but was unable to, as the baggage was scattered in the bush. He, and Locke, the other survivor, claimed that the other white men had been killed. Even though, in his own account, he had only witnessed the deaths of Copland-Crawford, Dr. Elliott and Maling.⁷ One of the Itsikeri carriers, who survived the ambush and was captured,

⁶ BPP 1898, (c 8627) LX 91. *Massacre of Mr Phillips Diplomatic Expedition to the King of Benin.*

⁷ A. Boisragon, *The Benin Massacre*, London, 1898.

said that when he was brought o Benin City on the day following the ambush, he saw four white men sitting, tied up, in the King's sacrifice compound. On the day after this the heads of four white men, with stick-gags in their mouths, were brought round the other captives. In his book, *City of Blood Revisited*, Robert Home claims that Moor accepted this account. He went on to write that, at Moor's request, news of the fate of these white men was suppressed to spare relatives of those killed 'in the ambush' further distress. There could have been other white men who were also taken to Benin City alive, but reports by survivors of the ambush, and later from captured Edo, indicating that all captured whites were killed within two days of the ambush. One report did reach Sapele after the ambush that Kenneth Campbell was not wounded in the ambush, but was captured, taken to Benin City and ritually killed two days after the ambush.

Following the capture of the city, Admiral Rawson's force remained for a short while assisting the NCPF to establish a defended post in there, bringing up ammunition and supplies. Once this was completed they returned to the fleet. All casualties, and the Royal Marines originally brought from England, returned home in the *Malacca*. The principal chiefs were later captured and some hanged for their part in the massacre. A few months after this, King, Oba Overami, unable to live as a fugitive in the Forrest, surrendered. He was spared execution and detained in the Protectorate: Not exiled like Chief Nana.

On 25 May 1897, the names of those awarded honours for their actions in Benin were published in the *London Gazette*. Major T H de-M. Roche, RMLI, was awarded the DSO, and a Brevet promotion to Lieutenant-Colonel. Captain G L Beaumont, RMLI, was awarded a Brevet promotion to major. Many officers, and men, were mentioned in despatches, but it must be remembered that at that time there was no emblem conferred. It was in 1919, that formal recognition was given royal approval, and in 1920, the oak leaf symbol was instituted. Those mentioned by Rear Admiral Rawson, were, Major, Roche, Captains G T Byrne and G L Beaumont, of the RMLI. Also mentioned in the despatch are Lieutenants, Diblee [Dibblee] and Robinson, [Robertson] both of whom 'commanded sections of the marines.'⁸ Captain Byrne was hit by a bullet that lodged in his spine during the final attack on 18 February. He was carried by stretcher, in agony, back to Ologbo. From there he was evacuated to the *Malacca*, and on to St Thomas's Hospital at Westminster. The newly introduced X-Ray equipment could not trace the bullet. Captain Byrne died on 25 March and is buried in Haslar naval cemetery.⁹

RM casualties sustained during the expedition totalled 10, one killed in action and nine wounded. Some of the wounded possibly died as a result of their wounds like Captain Byrne. Other casualties were, two marines died from sunstroke, one from fever, and another drowned in the Benin River. Full details including divisional numbers, parent ship, and the incident in which the casualties occurred are contained in Admiral Rawson's despatch mentioned above. In her book, *The Last Post*, Mildred Dooner mentions Robertson's MID. This could be the Robinson, mentioned by Admiral Rawson. The only Robinson in the *Army list* at the time had the initials, GV.¹⁰ Likewise; Lieutenant Dibblee's name is spelt Diblee in Rawson's despatch, but there is no 'Diblee', and only one 'Dibblee', in the *Army List* for the period. It must be remembered that both these gentlemen, had arrived in the *Malacca*, gone straight into the forest, and had departed, before the despatch was written. There was very little time to clarify names.

⁸ Admiral. Rawson's despatch to the Admiralty, 27 February 1897, contained in *British Parliamentary Papers*, 1897, LX

⁹ Robert Home, London, 1982, p. 97.

¹⁰ Mildred G. Dooner, *The Last Post*, Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent & Co. Ltd., London 1903. This is the source for Robertson's MID. His name does not appear in the BPP reference above. A useful book on those who died in the Boer War.



Inscription on Robertson's headstone:

IN MEMORY
 CLAUDE WILLIAM
 ROBERTSON
 CAPTAIN
 ROYAL MARINE
 LIGHT INFANTRY
 COMMANDING B
 SQUADRON
 1ST REGT AUSTRALIAN
 BUSHMEN
 KILLED IN ACTION
 AT MAGATO PASS
 JULY 22ND 1900
 BORN
 SEPTEMBER 10TH 1868

Dr Ross Bastiaan OAM RFD at Captain Robertson's graveside, Rustenburg Republic of South Africa 5 August 2000

Lieutenant C W Robertson RMLI, was promoted to Captain on January 1898, and posted to HMS *Katoomba* (formerly the 3rd class cruiser *Pandora*) a unit of the Australasian Squadron based at Sydney.

At the outbreak of the war in South Africa, Captain Robertson obtained approval to go. On 24 February he was married to Edith Johnson, daughter of Mr Whittingdale Johnson, a NSW State Magistrate, at St. Mathias' Church Paddington. A few days later he was appointed to a temporary commission in the New South Wales (NSW) Bushmen's Contingent. This was announced in the NSW Government Gazette No. 185, at Sydney, on 27 February 1900.

Robertson went to South Africa in command of B squadron of the Australian Bushmen under Colonel Airey, and landed at Beira. They went first to Bulawayo and served at the relief of Mafeking. During the march to Pretoria the Bushmen moved towards Rustenburg. Robertson was killed in action on 22 July 1900, near Magato Pass. Captain. Robertson is buried at Rustenburg, his grave marked by a headstone bearing the badge of the Royal Marines. His name is inscribed on the monument in the Cambridge enclosure, St. James's Park, erected by all ranks of the Royal Marines Artillery and Light Infantry to the memory of their comrades who fell in South Africa and China: also on the War Memorial in the cloisters at Charterhouse.

The British Garrison in Australia 1788 – 1841, Guard Detachments on Convict Transports

Clem Sargent

In the article on the movement of the 40th Regiment as Guard Detachments, in *Sabretache* Vol LXI, December 2000, reference was made to the Regulations to be observed by detachments of troops embarked on board convict transports, promulgated in *Orders and Regulations For The Army – 1837*. These Regulations have been transcribed from an original copy of the *Regulations* held by the Library of the Australian Defence Force Academy, Canberra, and appear below. As far as possible the Regulations are presented in the style of the original.

REGULATIONS to be observed by Detachments of Troops embarked on board CONVICT SHIPS

There is no Duty which can occur to a Regimental Officer, (whatever his rank,) in which unceasing Vigilance is more required, than that connected with the command of a *Convict-Guard*; and there is no point connected with that Duty, in which Watchfulness and Attention on his part are more essential, than the rigid enforcement, in the Men of his Detachment, of the Instructions laid down for his guidance.

The General Commanding-in-Chief is anxious to impress these Instructions upon the attention of Officers Commanding Detachments employed on this Duty ; as any laxity of discipline or deficiency in the exercise of proper Vigilance and Caution. might be attended with most serious consequences, and entail disgrace on the Officers and Soldiers, and also on the Regiment to which they belong, by whose remissness and neglect such consequences may have arisen.

1st. The Officer Commanding a Guard, immediately it is embarked, is to apply to the Surgeon, or Superintending Officer, for his full and active co-operation in carrying these Instructions into effect.

2nd. The Soldiers are to be cautioned and strictly prohibited from holding any intercourse or communication with the Convicts, and that a disregard of the Orders on the subject will be met with certain punishment. The Soldiers, even the Sentinel, is not to reply to any question or communication addressed to him by a Convict ; in the event of being addressed, he must call for the Non-commissioned Officer on duty, but he is on no occasion at liberty to answer the Convict. The Convicts will be apprized, by the Surgeon Superintending, of this Order to the Soldiers.

3rd. The Detachment is to be divided into three Watches or Reliefs, each Relief to continue on Duty as follows, viz: -

1st	from	8 to 12 AM
2nd	"	12 " 4 PM
3rd	"	4 " 6 "
1st	"	6 " 8 "
2nd	"	8 " 12 "
3rd	"	12 " 4 AM
1st	"	4 " 8 "

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4th. During the day the Guard is to be stationed on the Poop, and their Arms so disposed on the top of the *Arm Chest*, as to be immediately available in case of need. At night the Guard is to be stationed on the Quarter-Deck and the Arms placed in an Arm-Rack to be made for this purpose.

5th. Three Sentries are to be furnished and relieved every hour.

6th. During the Day, the Sentries are to be posted as follows: -

One at the Windward Gangway, and one on each side of the front of the Poop ; the former is to keep the Doors in the Barricado constantly closed, prevent the Prisoners coming aft, except passed by order, and will generally attend to their behaviour whilst on Deck;- the latter will overlook the Convicts, and immediately report to the Non-commissioned Officer of the Watch any irregularity he may notice, or, if necessary, call on the Guard to stand to their Arms.

7th. The Officer Commanding the Detachment must be immediately acquainted with any instances of disorderly Conduct amongst the Prisoners, and in concert with the Surgeon Superintending, take such measures as are necessary to repress it.

8th. During the Night, the Sentries are to be posted as follows: -

One down each Hatchway, and one at the Windward Gangway.

The former are to prevent the Prisoners from making a noise, and to report any sounds they may hear, which appear to proceed from sawing Planks, filing Iron, or from any other cause of a suspicious nature.

9th. Should any light be observed in the Prison, the circumstance is to be immediately reported to the Surgeon Superintending. These Sentries are to be armed with a Pistol and Cutlass, and previous to taking charge of their Post, are to ascertain that the Locks on the Prison Doors are secure.

10th. The Sentinel at the Gangway is to keep the Door of the Barricado closed, and will be in immediate communication with the Guard.

11th. When the Ship's Bell strikes the half-hour, the Sentries are to call "All is Well," commencing with No 1, and being repeated in succession by Nos 2 and 3.

12th. In case of Alarm, the Guard is immediately to stand to their Arms, and be in readiness to act as circumstances may require.

13th. The Non-commissioned Officer of the Guard during the Day is to take charge of the Keys of the Prison, and attend to any instructions he may receive from the Surgeon Superintending, with reference to the Prisoners.

14th. He is to post the Sentries, attend to the Reliefs, and see that the Men are vigilant in the performance of their Duties.

15th. Whilst on Duty, no Soldier is to quit the Post assigned for the Guard, without permission to do so.

16th. Besides the Non-commissioned Officer of the Watch, a Non-commissioned Officer of the Day must be appointed, for the purpose of superintending the Messing, cleaning the Barracks, and attending to other details of this description.

17th. The Detachment is to breakfast at eight o'clock, and immediately after breakfast, everyone must repair on Deck, with the exception of the Men who are appointed to clean the Barracks.

18th. At Ten o'clock the watches off Duty are to parade without Arms for the purpose of Inspection, and twice each Week without Shoes or Stockings. At One o'clock the Men are to dine, and at Six the Fire is to be put out. On Sundays, the Detachment is to parade with Arms, when the Firelocks and Ammunition are to be carefully examined.

- 19th. In case of Alarm during the Night, the Guard on Duty is immediately to occupy the Hatchways, and if necessary, employ their Arms to repel any attempt by the Convicts to gain the Deck. The Soldiers of the next Relief are to hasten to the Barricado, and to occupy each Gangway. The remaining Watch is to proceed to the Poop, and act as a Reserve.
- 20th. The Sailors, armed with Cutlasses, are to proceed to the Hatchways, or assist in defending the Barricado and Quarter-Deck. If necessary, the Men on the Quarter-Deck are to retire into the Cuddy, and fire through the windows; The Reserve is then to fire from the Poop.
- 21st. It is right to caution the Soldiers against making any unnecessary noise, as it is important that the Orders, which it may be necessary to give, be distinctly heard.
- 22nd. Should an attempt be made to capture the Vessel during the day, the Guard on Duty, instead of repairing to the Hatchways, is to defend the Barricado and Quarter-Deck, and to be reinforced by the next Watch. If the Quarter-Deck be carried, the Men on Guard are to retire to the Cuddy, and the next Relief is to hasten to join the Reserve on the Poop.
- 23rd. It is necessary to caution the Detachment against the means which may be employed to divert their attention, in the event of an attempt to carry the Vessel being meditated. In cases where this intention has existed, an Alarm has been created by the cry of "a Man overboard," or by some such means; and during the tumult which followed, the Prisoners rushed aft, and endeavoured to effect their purpose. It must therefore be distinctly understood, that in all cases of Alarm, the Guard immediately stand to their Arms, and the Men not on Duty repair to their respective posts. The Soldiers of the Detachment must likewise be cautioned to be vigilant in the discharge of their duty as Sentinels; they must not relax in their watchfulness, nor permit the seeming tranquillity of the Prisoners to lull them into a dangerous security. The Officers of the Detachment, and the Non-commissioned Officers of the Watch, are to visit the Sentries frequently during the Night.
- 24th. It will be advisable from time to time, when the Convicts are below, to practice the Watches in repairing to their Posts. This may be done without Arms, and, if possible, so as to prevent the Prisoners becoming acquainted with the arrangements. Whenever it is necessary to flog a Convict, a Guard must parade under Arms on the Poop, and at *all times* when the *whole* of the Prisoners are on Deck, the Detachment of Troops is to be on the Poop, and ready to act.
- 25th. For the purpose of keeping the Arms in perfect Order, and in a state of fitness for Service, the Arms of each Watch are to be used alternatively throughout the 24 hours; they are to be discharged at daylight in the Morning, and those of the next Watch loaded.
- 26th. Upon all occasions when Arms and Accoutrements are issued from the Ordnance Stores, for the temporary use of Men composing, or forming part of, a Convict-Guard, the Officer embarking in charge thereof is to sign a Receipt to the Storekeeper for the number delivered to him, as also for the Ammunition, and is held responsible that such Arms and Accoutrements, as soon as the Service for which they were issued is completed, are carefully given in to the Ordnance Storekeeper at the Station at which the Convicts disembark, taking from him, in return, a Receipt for those Articles, and for whatever spare Ammunition may remain, after the prescribed Daily Expenditure during the voyage. The Officer is to transmit a Copy of this Receipt, through the Officer Commanding on the Station (New South Wales or Van Diemen's Land) to the Commandant at Chatham, for the purpose of being forwarded to the Office of Ordnance.
- 27th. In the event of Officers, who proceed in charge of Convict-Guards, having any complaint to make respecting their accommodation, they are to prefer the same to the General or other Officer Commanding at the Station where the Detachment may disembark, in order that immediate investigation may take place on the spot, and a special report (if necessary) made of the result.

48th Northamptonshire Regiment 1817-1825, *The Heroes of Talavera*

Background

1741	Raised as 59th Regiment.
1745	At Culloden.
1748	Redesignated 48th.
1755-1771	West Indies and N America.
1771-1795	England.
1795-1801	West Indies.
1801-1809	England, Mediterranean.
1809-1814	Peninsular War.
1814-1817	Ireland.

In New South Wales

August 1817	Four hundred and ninety seven all ranks, including the HQ, arrived at Port Jackson in the transports <i>Matilda</i> , <i>Lloyds</i> , and <i>Dick</i> . The regiment was reinforced to a strength of 1000 in 1824, by the successive arrival of detachments of 30-50 all ranks as guard detachments on convict transports.
January 1818	Major Gilbert Cimitiere with two officers and 80 OR relieved the detachment of the 46 th at Port Dalrymple (Launceston) in Van Diemens Land (VDL).
11 June 1818	Brevet Major Thomas Bell and a company of the 48th relieved the 46th at Hobart Town.
April 1818	Lt Cuthbertson and a party from Port Dalrymple recaptured escaped convicts at Western River, VDL.
June/July 1818	Members of the 48th relieved detachments of the Veteran Coy at Bathurst and Cox's River.
May 1818	Two soldiers 48th, Ptes Fraser and Thacker, accompanied Surveyor General Oxley on his expedition to Liverpool Plains and to the coast at the mouth of the Hunter River.
July 1818	Gov Macquarie forwarded submission to Lord Bathurst, Secretary for Colonies, requesting the garrison strength be increased to a minimum of 1000 troops, to control growing convict population.
August 1818	Grant of 3000 acres to Col Erskine CO 48th, in his capacity as Lt Governor, named "Erskine Park", now a western suburb of that name.
August 1818	Notorious bushranger Michael Howe killed by Pte Pugh and convict Worrall in VDL.
January 1819	Relief of 46th at Newcastle.
February 1819	Controversy Col Erskine/Commissary Drennan concerning the operation of the Regimental mill.

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| May 1819 | Lt Close and a party of 22 soldiers sent from Sydney in pursuit of bushrangers (escaped convicts) in the Cowpastures, west of the Nepean River. Close reported 'a want of success' in his efforts. |
| Sep 1819 | HQ at Port Dalrymple moved to George Town by direction of Governor Macquarie, |
| October 1819 | Soldiers at George Town demanded back issues of rum. |
| 26 Sep 1819 | Commissioner of Inquiry, J T Bigge, arrived in Sydney |
| January 1820 | The first Australian Masonic Lodge, with Samuel Clayton as Master of Ceremonies, established under the sponsorship of the 48th's Military Lodge. |
| April 1820 | Mary Nesbitt raped by soldiers at Launceston. |
| 18 July 1820 | Sgt Heywood and party capture bushrangers near Jericho in VDL; Sgt Flanders and party also active. |
| 3 August 1820 | Lt T V Blomfield married Christiana Brooks, daughter of Richard Brooks, prominent settler. |
| 6 October 1820 | Pte Greenaway deserted with convicts from Newcastle. |
| 29 October 1820 | First Wesleyan prayer meeting at Hobart, attended by soldiers of the 48th. |
| 16 March 1821 | Two parties of the 48th in pursuit of bushrangers in VDL fire on each other — Cpl Deane was killed. |
| April 1821 | Captain Francis Allman, with two officers and 37 soldiers established first settlement at Port Macquarie, as a place of secondary punishment. |
| July 1821 | Lt Lachlan McAlister became the first officer to leave regiment to settle in colony. |
| Sep 1821 | Lt E C Close married Sophia Palmer, daughter of Jack Palmer, Purser on the <i>Sirius</i> , Commissary, and successful settler. |
| 1 December 1821 | Governor Brisbane assumed office vice Macquarie. |
| December 1821 | Rev George Middleton complained that Major Morisset, Comdant at Newcastle, was living in adultery. |
| 21 December | Lt John Cuthbertson, with 17 soldiers, sailed from Hobart to establish the first settlement at Macquarie Harbour, on west coast of VDL, as a place of secondary punishment. |
| January 1822 | Board of Enquiry established to investigate Major Druitt's management of the Engineering Department. |
| February 1822 | Pte Brittain dies on the road from George Town to Launceston while carrying despatches. |
| 1 March 1822 | First detachment of the 3rd Regiment, the Buffs, arrived at Port Jackson as convict transport guards. |
| March 1822 | Convicts who made the first attempt to escape from Macquarie Harbour perished in the bush. |
| April 1822 | Major operation to round up bushrangers in VDL. |
| Sep 1822 | Assistant Surgeon James Mitchell goes on to half-pay to settle in NSW. |

Sep 1822	Alexander Pearce made a successful escape from Macquarie Harbour by cannibalising his fellow escapees but was recaptured.
July 1823	Det 48th paraded in Hobart Town in "new clothing".
November 1823	Second attempt by Pearce to escape.
14 Nov 1823	First detachment of the 40th Regiment, replacement for the 48th arrived in Port Jackson.
23 Dec 1823	Lt Cuthbertson drowned at Macquarie Harbour.
January 1824	Relief of detachment 48th at Macquarie Harbour by Buffs.
5 March 1824	HQ and 4 Coys embarked at Sydney for India.
7 April 1824	VDL company embarked at Hobart Town.
1825	Last 3 companies sail from NSW.

Transfers 48th Regiment to the 40th

Sgt Peter McWharrie	returned to England 1826
Cpl James McConnell ¹	
Pte Benjamin Abel	
Pte William Blandford	returned to England 11 May 1824
Pte William Giddes	
Pte John Hadlington ¹	
Pte Henry James ¹	
Pte John Lee ¹	
Pte Peter McAuley	
Pte Lewis Moore ¹	
Pte Patrick Scantling	returned to England 11 May 1824
Pte Francis Thorpe	
Pte John White	

Twenty-one members of the 48th transferred to the 3rd Regiment waiting discharge in NSW. Thirty-one transferred to the 3rd waiting return to England for discharge.

Outline notes on officers and soldiers of the 48th who settled in NSW and VDL can be found in Appx X to *The Colonial Garrison 1817-1824*.

References

- Lt-Col Russell Gurney, *History of the Northamptonshire Regiment 1742-1934*, Aldershot, 1935.
 Clem Sargent, *The Colonial Garrison 1817-1824*, Canberra. 1996.

¹ Member of the Governor's Body Guard of Light Horse. (see *Sabretache* Vol XXXIX No 4, Dec 98, pp 10-11)